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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Conditions in the Fishing Industry: ARKA Cooperative/
Shrinking Fishermen's Incomes/Ineffectual Trade Unions/
Political Ties/Private Fishermen/Restrictions on Movement
Soviet vs Polish Methods.

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1. "The following information on the Polish fishing industry dates through early May 1953.
The ARKA Cooperative
2. "ARKA is the leading Polish fishing cooperative on the Baltic. Like other Polish cooper-
atives it is actually state-owned. Its offices are at Washington Street in Gdynia.
3. "During 1952 there were many changes in the ARKA management. The second secretary of the
voivodeship CP committee in Gdansk. (fnu) Krupa is the present general manager. The fishing manager (dyrektor
do spraw polowowych) is (fnu) Oleszkiewicz. He then became
manager of the fishing cooperative GRYF at Wladyslawowo. Now GRYF belongs to ARKA. The
personnel chief of ARKA is (fnu) Smejlski. The personnel
chief for the fishermen's section (fnu) Rogowski
(fnu) Kulakowski is the personnel chief of the crews' section
(kierownik dzialu personalnego zalog). The ARKA Cooperative has about 800 members.
4. "The dangerous agents and active Communists in ARKA at Gdynia include Kazimierz Minowski,
a former militiaman, who is a member of the CP committee (POP), and Alojzy Etyranski, manager
of the fishing base at Wladyslawowo.

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5. "In 1952 ARKA fell short of its plan. The fishing plan was fulfilled only 80%. This was mainly due to ARKA's management by members of the Party instead of by professional fishermen. Plans are drawn up without any consideration of resources and capacity. Owing to the shortage of spare parts and to the poor equipment, far too many fishing cutters are permanently at the shipyards for repairs. This percentage is increasing from year to year. In early 1953 about 23% of ARKA's fishing cutters were out of operation at the shipyards. In 1952 the figure was even greater. This fact is not taken into consideration when the plans are drawn up for the fishing season. The fishing plan sent down by the ministry has even been increased by the cooperative to please the authorities. The 1952 plan failure plus the escapes abroad of a number of fishermen probably caused the thorough changes in the ARKA management. The new management has intensified the political supervision and reliability control of the fishermen. Many fishermen have been purged. In 1952 Oleszkiewicz fired 12 fishermen because they refused to fish on Sunday or came to work late on a Sunday. Frequent purges, the diminishing number of new applicants because of the shrinking incomes in the fishing profession and the intense political control have placed ARKA in a difficult position. On the one hand the increased demand for fish and the non-fulfilment of the plan necessitates an increased output; on the other hand the cooperative is beginning to be short of fishermen, especially of trained ones.

Shrinking Fishermen's Incomes

6. "The incomes of fishermen have shrunk from year to year. From having been a very profitable occupation after World War II, particularly as a private enterprise, fishing has gradually become less lucrative. At the same time the exploitation of fishermen has increased. The cooperatives give the fishermen hardly any free days, forcing them to put out to sea on holidays and Sundays. An exception is made only for the Kashubian fishermen. They are so devout that they would rather lose their jobs than go to sea on a Sunday. Yet they are also the most experienced Polish fishermen. The nationalized enterprises in their dependence on the fulfilment of plans cannot afford to lose the Kashubians.
7. "Until recently a 1st Class, foreign-going fishing skipper (Szkyper pierwszej lokaty, daleko-morski) who fished in the North Sea earned a salary of 520 zlotys per month plus 5.3% of the gross value of the catch. In a good season a skipper could make up to about 2,200 zlotys monthly. On the Baltic Sea incomes are generally smaller. A skipper who served on an ARKA Baltic cutter earned approximately 1,200 zlotys per month. On a 2 m trawler the wage of a junior fisherman was 380 zlotys per month plus 3.8% of the gross value of the catch.
8. "At the 'shift' of 1953 owing to the fishermen's protests, ARKA reverted to the original system of paying the fishermen only a percentage of the value of the catch. In February 1953 the cutter GDY 57 caught 10,446 kg of 1st quality cod to a value of 12,535.20 zlotys. The engineer's part of the catch was 82% = 1,028.80 zlotys. As he was sent to a motor training course on land in that same month he got a compensation of 1,123.98 zlotys for lost fishing days. This means that his income was 2,152.85 zlotys. He paid an income tax of 167.70,5 zlotys towards the reconstruction of Warsaw and 153.40 zlotys for the food provided by the cooperative during the time he was at sea. This means that his net income was 1,826.69 zlotys in February.
9. "ARKA has tried by every means to increase its own take at the expense of the fishermen. They give the fishermen a low wholesale price but sell the fish at a high retail price. Until spring 1953, first quality cod was valued at 1.20 zlotys and second quality at 0.60 zlotys; first quality herring at 3.30 zlotys, second quality at 2.40 zlotys, and third quality at 0.90 zlotys. On the market ARKA sold cod for 9.30 zlotys. During the 'capitalistic' era the difference between wholesale and retail prices was never so great.
10. "During the first post-World War II years, when fishing was not yet nationalized, the incomes of fishermen were much better. At that time the shipowner took the value of 57% of the catch while the crew got 43%. The expenses for fuel were divided. Usually the fishermen were entitled to sell their part of the catch privately and to take home as much fish as they wished. A skipper on a private fishing cutter had an approximate monthly income of 120,000-150,000 zlotys in the old currency. Now he can buy for his entire income of 1,200 zlotys only one suit of a material containing only 60% wool, or 25 kg of butter.

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11. "The first new general agreement after ARKA and the other fishing companies were nationalized was signed in 1948. A salary system was introduced. The salary was then 660 zlotys plus 5.1% of the catch value to a skipper on the Baltic. Fuel, working clothes and social insurance were paid by the company. As this system gave the fishermen far too little, their complaints had to be considered especially as there started to be a shortage of new candidates for this dangerous profession. Now the fishermen get only a percentage of the catch. A skipper gets 10.1 % an engineer 8.2% a practitioner 3%. He also gets a small salary of 250 zlotys as he would be unable to live on his percentage. The fishermen must still pay their share of the fuel. As long as the fishermen could take a few herrings or cod ashore to feed their family or sell the fish it was still possible to live decently. Since this 'help to the family' has ceased, the fishermen, the married ones in particular, are not well off. In winter 1952-53 a fisherman got eight months for taking home eight fish. In protest against the deteriorated conditions about 60 workers of the cooperative JEDNOCES RYBACKA left the society this winter. Thereupon the ministry increased the price of fish slightly. For the first quality cod they now pay 1.57 zlotys instead of 1.20, for second quality 1.20 and for third quality 0.97 zlotys. But at the same time the price for fuel has been increased from 1.40 the litre to 2.80 per litre. The fishermen have not profited very much by the raised prices. Protests against the rise of the fuel price failed.

Ineffectual Trade Unions

12. "As complaints have no results and the Trade Unions have become instruments of the state and CP to squeeze more efficient work out of the fishermen, the fishermen have lost all interest in the meetings and keep away under various pretexts. The meetings of the fishermen of the ARKA Fishing Cooperative are usually attended only by the skippers who are held personally responsible if they do not participate. In order not to lose the respect of their comrades these skippers must explain away the absence of the crews. Thus the last ARKA fishermen's meeting held in April 1953 in the reading room of the fishermen's club at ARKA, was attended almost entirely by the skippers. The meeting was headed by the management of the cooperative, the trade union and CP representatives-five men in all. As the fishermen were full of bitter feelings they dared to break the usual silence. They complained about the bad food delivered to them at sea by the cooperative, poor housing conditions and bad incomes. Manager Oleszkiewicz, one of the chairmen, told the secretary to 'write it down'. Then he abruptly closed the discussion. The meeting ended with the usual demand of the cooperative for more efficient work so it could fulfill its own plan and help the six-year plan.

13. "Meetings of the ARKA fishermen are generally organized in the reading room of the ARKA Club in Ulica Zermoskiego. On 12 Mar 53 a narada wytworcza or production council was called to discuss the general rise of salaries proclaimed by the government. The meeting was led by general manager Krupa, the fishing manager Oleszkiewicz and the POP secretary. As usual Oleszkiewicz was the chief agitator. He pointed out that salaries had gone up 18% but did not mention that prices had risen 50 % and more. Oleszkiewicz urged the fishermen to show themselves worthy of the government's benevolence by excelling the plan and fishing Sundays.

Political Affiliations

14. "According to the latest rumours (early May 1953) even ordinary fishing cutters such as sail on the Baltic Sea (15-20 metres long with a crew of four or five) will carry a K0 officer (politruk). Most 'supercutters' (with a crew of seven) already do. The job of these K0's will be to maintain discipline, prevent escapes, and get the fishermen to catch more fish.

15. "It becomes more and more difficult to stay in the cooperative and get permits to put out to sea if one does not join the CP and avoids political activities. About 50% of ARKA's fishermen (the cooperative has about 800) have therefore joined the CP. Most of the younger ones have joined the ZMP.

Socialist Competitions

16. "The average norm for ARKA fishing cutter is 50 tons per month. During crew meetings Communist agitators try to persuade some skippers to agree to socialist competitions. They must promise to catch 15 or 20 tons over the plan. The winners get premia in the form of cigarette lighters or permits to buy a radio set on the installment plan. It is

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nowadays almost impossible for the man in the street to get a new radio set. His only chance is to buy an expensive second hand set, and he has difficulty in obtaining spare parts. In March and April 1953 Skipper (fnu) Gilewicz, a Communist, and his crew were first in the competition. Premia of between 500 and 300 zl were also paid then. The case of the 1951 competition winner, Jozef Madycki is much discussed. Madycki was a prewar sailor who fought from the UK during World War II. His ambition was awakened and he succeeded in winning the competition three times in succession. The result was that he got consumption. He is now no longer able to do hard work and is falling into misery. Finally in March 1953 he took home ten meters of fishing line from his cutter and was arrested. He has a wife and three children, who live in a little house on Wzgorze Pocha at Gdynia.

Private Fishermen

17. "No private fishing enterprises exist in Poland today, but individual fishermen with one boat are still tolerated.

18. "Such individual fishermen are no longer able to market their fish privately. The few remaining private owners of fishing cutters are obliged to sell their entire catch to ARKA at established prices. The individual fisherman must sign a contract with ARKA and undertake to deliver fish according to the established plan. He has to pay 12% more tax than the socialized fishermen. A private fisherman who objected to signing a contract with ARKA would be deprived of fuel and fishing equipment. However, a private fisherman is still better off than a socialized fisherman. Every time a private fisherman puts out to sea he is obliged to take a permit from the WOP.

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Restrictions on Fishermen's Freedom of Movement

21. "Compared with the first years after World War II the freedom of movement of fishermen has been much restricted. They are forbidden to visit foreign harbours. Those who fish for herring on the North Sea sign a special agreement with their company. The harbour of Ejmujden, Holland, is their fishing base. The Polish fishing company DALMOR which fishes on the North Sea works with the Dutch firm of Krajger. The fishermen are permitted to sail to Ejmujden when they have

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completed their catch. There they deliver the catch. The skipper must always inform his company whenever he sails to Ejmujden but he need not wait for a confirmation. The company is, of course, able to stop the ship on its way to Ejmujden and order it, e.g., to Gdynia. No other foreign harbour may be visited. In case of trouble the skipper has no permission to sail to a foreign harbour without the special authorization of the company. In any event no Belgian harbour may be visited by Polish ships except those ships going to Belgium as regular liners or cargo ships under the trade agreement. (Poland has not yet returned some locomotives to Belgium, and the Poles are afraid that Polish ships may be held in Belgium.) A special allowance in foreign currency (\$1.--per day to a skipper) is paid to the DAIMOR fishermen when at sea. This allowance in foreign currency is not paid to ARKA or any other Baltic fishing company as the men are not expected to visit any foreign harbour. Skippers who sail on the North Sea are obliged to sign a statement that they have read the regulations and know them.

22. "Various other restrictions limit the freedom of movement of fishermen. They must sail in groups of several cutters. One skipper leads the group. He has to maintain radio contact with the cooperative and with other cutters. The fishermen are permitted to have only their working clothes on the cutters--no civilian clothes, no foreign currency. Only members of the crew are permitted to go on board the cutter. Members of other cutters, when visiting their comrades, are obliged to take a permit from the WOP. The inspection of each cutter before leaving port and after return is thorough. Since people from Wladyslawowo escaped by hiding in a water tank, orders have been issued to WOP to inspect these tanks. During the time a cutter is in harbour the microphone of the radio must be handed over to WOP. The fish crates are also inspected when the cutters return. About eight men are needed to inspect two cutters. The inspection of seagoing cutters takes two to four hours. The fishermen are subjected to bodily search.

Soviet vs Polish Fishing Methods

23. "At production councils (narada wytworcza) or political lectures the Polish fishermen are often told that Soviet fishermen and fishing methods are superior. They are told to follow Soviet methods. Actually the Soviets lag far behind the Poles on the Baltic Sea. For several years the Poles have had the best catches of cod; the Swedes and Danes have had the best catches of salmon. The Soviets fish on the Baltic with the same equipment and methods they use on the Barents Sea or the Arctic Ocean. The praise of the Soviet fishermen has only increased the general disbelief in the Communist propaganda. For fun some ARKA fishermen once asked the management to be sent to the USSR to learn 'superior' methods. This was naturally not permitted."

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